

Bells for John Stewart's Burden:

A Sermon upon the Desirable Death of the "New Provincialism"
Here Typified*

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"Regionalism is . . . limited in space but not in time. The provincial attitude is limited in time but not in space . . . provincialism is that state of mind in which regional men lose their origin in the past and its continuity into the present, and begin every day as if there had been no yesterday. . . . what a difference—and it is a difference between two worlds: the provincial world of the present, which sees in material welfare and legal justice the whole solution to the human problem; and the classical-Christian world, based upon regional consciousness, which held that honor, truth, imagination, human dignity, and limited acquisitiveness, could alone justify a social order however rich and efficient it may be. . . . From now on we are committed to seeing with, not through the eye: we, as provincials who do not live anywhere."

Allen Tate, "The New Provincialism," *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, 1945.

GIVEN such a complex and inclusive attempt as Mr. Stewart has elected to make in this study of the Fugitive-Agrarians, one inevitably finds much to argue with in his book. But there is finally so much to protest that I conclude it a bad book indeed. There is an impossible chaos, not of the kind one encounters in certain books resulting from a failure of general organization, for the general form of *The Burden of Time* is acceptable enough: approximately the first half is devoted to the background of the Fugitive and Agrarian movements and to the history of the emergence of the groups, the second half to a detailed consideration of the work of John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Robert Penn Warren. The chaos I object to in the book lies finally in the mind of Mr. Stewart as it attempts to deal with literary works and with ideas. To some extent one can sympathize; the very multiplicity of men, works, ideas dealt with is formidable. The attempt for instance to treat exhaustively a John Crowe Ransom

*John L. Stewart, *The Burden of Time: the Fugitives and Agrarians*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965. 552pp. \$12.50.

who is, in addition to being an accomplished poet, one of the central forces in a group of distinguished poets, a critic of art and of history and economics for forty years, and polemicist in a metaphysical approach to contemporary society whose aim was the preservation of and integration of the individual. The multiplicity leads Stewart to those partial statements about ideas and poems on one page that do not find any complementary conciliation with partial statements made in other places. There is also a weakness at work, undercutting the larger appearance of order, that must be described as a lack of aesthetic acumen; much of the literary analysis in the book is either superficial or demonstrably wrong.

But the most fundamental cause of the book's chaos, which in sum gives one a mental and spiritual indigestion, is a provincial bias which does not allow Stewart to approach the ideas or the art or the poet or essayist in a manner which is at least initially disinterested. Cliché-riddled conclusion tends to be anterior to the particulars considered. Not that pre-judgment is by definition wrong; the full and healthy growth of judgment should allow for conclusion sometimes immediately upon encounter of one's judgment with a particular idea. Surely the physician, after ten years practice, can diagnose virus infection without specimen slides; the dentist doesn't always require x-ray to discover cavities. One may learn to see *through* the eye and not merely *with* the eye, as Tate urges us to consider. But, alas, one may also see *with* the eye as misguided by the nose. If one is going to conclude at first whiff that an idea is sour, he must for his own sake do so with a proper appreciation of his nose's limitations; for larger sakes when he is in a position to deny needed sustenance to the hungry. Mr. Stewart, unless my eyes and nose deceive me, mistakes old beef for sour beef and prefers finally the kind of indefinite mush which is the general fare in our elaborate academic and political refectories. I propose now to examine in some detail the mess of potage Stewart serves us. In consequence, I shall go substantially beyond the limits of the usual book review, for the truth is that our birthright is at stake.

The great pity is that Mr. Stewart, like most of us, is caught up by what Alexander Hamilton warned of, a popular current, against which there is no correction by a permanent will because there is no longer any conception of an ultimate end. Thus when he is faced with the almost impossible task of defining that now ancient dog under our groaning table, The South, supposed by the generality to be principal

carrier of various viruses, he is scarcely prepared to evaluate those sources upon which he bases his judgments—as often as not rumor made the moment's history by instant journalism. In pursuit of the question of why such a harvest of poems and fictions in the South since World War I, Stewart attempts a careful qualification of his evidence and judgment; but because his heart wants him to be on the side of the disinfecting angels, his head won't let him try whether those angels of the moment are caitiff or not. He moves from a sublime desire, nurtured in the academic and political laboratory, to a mission in the field. The result? A few tracks recorded, a scrap of fur, a worn down fang or two, partially restored with plaster. Finally there is little more substantiation of the beast, The South, than of that less infectious creature, the Abominable Snowman. There is a rehash of some old evidence, already presented with better clinical eye by the Fugitives themselves, and with conclusions quite contrary to Stewart's. Thus Stewart presents, from a decidedly provincial position, generalizations which are not perceptively related to the literature itself.

There is, by way of illustration, the question of whether the isolation of Tate, Warren, Ransom, Davidson, and the other Fugitives at Vanderbilt, as opposed to the presumably more liberated position of the expatriates of Paris or Greenwich Village, was good for the young Fugitives. Stewart concludes that the isolation was good. But he does so only after he has shown rather conclusively, as Louise Cowan has done before him in her *Fugitive Group*, that they were not isolated. Indeed, it is a question for a more searching study of the Fugitives than Stewart's whether the expatriates of the 20's, other than Pound perhaps, were as aware of the cultural and literary issues involved in the publication of *The Waste Land* as were Ransom, Davidson, and Tate. Such a probing would have to deal with such fundamental questions about our itinerant artists of the 1920's as those raised by Tate in "The New Provincialism," particularly that section of his essay which argues:

Regionalism without civilization—which means, with us [Southerners] regionalism without classical-Christian culture—becomes provincialism; and world regionalism becomes world provincialism. For provincialism is that state of mind in which regional men lose their origins in the past and its continuity into the present, and begin every day as if there had been no yesterday.

The early recognition of regional virtues by the Fugitives (which Stewart denies to them as being early) and by those men in particular who moved on to Agrarian discourse—Ransom, Davidson, Tate, Warren—shows them far less isolated from the larger world of complicated time and place that Eliot announced in his poem than the shocked reaction of William Carlos Williams or the nostalgic reminiscences of young Ernest Hemingway over his private moment shows them to be.

Here, then, in Tate's definition of provincialism, as in order of the Fugitive-Agrarians' work, lies a significant center of concern in measuring the validity of their insight and accomplishments. For theirs was most certainly an attempt to cope with the eternal present without a provincial narrowness committing them only to the momentary. Stewart—and I am taking him as typical of a whole gaggle of writers and journalists as easily typified by John M. Bradbury or Ralph McGill—approaches such a question as the provincialism of Nashville, Tennessee, in the 1920's as if Tate were arguing that the artist should become Catholic or Davidson that the artist should live in a lonely cabin in Tennessee badlands. Handicapped by this view of the Fugitives, Stewart cannot see just how much and how early they become concerned with their own time; consequently he cannot see what light Davidson's sequence of poems, *The Tall Men* (1927), throws on Eliot's traditionalism. While condemning, even sarcastically ridiculing, what he takes to be Davidson's romantic, bookish view of history, which he concludes to be only a looking backward, Stewart fails to see that such escapism as he attributes to Davidson is precisely a facet of Eliotic romanticism under attack in Davidson's poems. Since very early in his career Davidson, while acknowledging that time leaves fragments, has considered history more lively than the butt-ends of our days and ways or sunlight on a broken column. Nor does he concede as inevitable that "Unnatural vices / are fathered by our heroism." He rejected early the deterministic concept of history that haunts Eliot's early poetry, both that aspect of it as applied by Charles Beard to American history and that psychological Pavlovianism applied to religion by Sir James Frazer in *The Golden Bough*.

Consequently Davidson reacts sharply to Eliot's early poetry, not because he fails to see the hollowness of the 1920's, but because he recognizes in that poetry a despair in Eliot himself, reflected in such surrealistic upside-down views of history as that in *The Waste Land's* "What the Thunder Said." Until after *The Waste Land*, Eliot found

no answer to determinism strong enough to command his commitment. But Eliot comes to see strongly "*through* the eye." The commitment of *Little Gidding* serves to underline the despair of "Gerontion," for by the time of the *Four Quartets* Cleo has become quite other than a woman with "her long black hair out tight" who fiddles "whisper music on those strings." History no longer has the strange look of *The Waste Land* in which

upside down in air were towers
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

Eliot's technique itself disguises the change in the poet—the kaleidoscopic "disembodied" voice in "Gerontion" and *The Waste Land*. The generous or awed respect of some critics in light of Eliot's genius and the incessant article mill requirements of other critics have contributed to a view of Eliot's whole work as if it were a steady unfolding of an initial vision. But the announcement in *For Lancelot Andrews* (1928) that he considered himself a classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion marks a significant development. It is, in fact, a recording of a commitment now strong enough so that history is capable of more than guiding us by our vanities through "many cunning passages, contrived corridors." Though Eliot's reading of Lancelot Andrews is older than "Gerontion," his commitment, "Costing not less than everything," is not. History, initially feminine and deceptive—Madame de Tornquist, Fraulein von Kulp, Madame Sosostriis—transforms toward St. Mary in *Ash Wednesday*. By *Little Gidding* (1942) Eliot writes in a voice that no longer carries the ambiguity of whether it is the poet's or Prufrock's or Tiresias':

A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England.

The point is that Eliot's final view of history is one that Davidson has already incorporated in his *Tall Men*.

In his flippant dismissal of Davidson as critic and poet, Stewart has done a grave disservice to a fine poet and to this complex poem. Had he examined such a technical aspect of the *Tall Men* as point of

view and compared it to that of *The Waste Land*, and perhaps to *Hugh Selweyn Mauberley*, he might have found the question of identity, courage, and risk contributing a richness in Davidson's collection of a separate order from Eliot's but at least as worthy, being actually closer to Pound's. Davidson's poem carries the consciousness of a poet in the city, but it is carefully made a definite person—not a disembodiment. The poet investigates the belief that history is *now*, as Eliot means the word in *Gidding*. It is the very process which Eliot is to describe as the end of all our exploring, which is "to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time." To a considerable degree Davidson's collection encompasses Eliot's journey from Prufrock's tea party to the *Cocktail Party*. A personal acceptance of individual and cultural limitations informs Davidson's *Tall Men*, which acceptance allows action, as one doesn't find action in *The Waste Land*, though the journey motif considerably disguises the absence of action in the poem and leads critics on goose chases no less wild than those after the Tarot cards, in pursuit of evidence of "hope" in those early poems. I shall comment on this absence of action in Eliot's early poems in more detail when I come to consider Stewart's treatment of Ransom's poetry. For the moment, let it suffice to suggest that Davidson is acutely aware of the temptations of the waste land (compare, for instance, his "Conversation in a Bedroom" in which sequence the Ego is confronted by such temptations of history as Eliot dramatizes in *Murder in the Cathedral*). The voice of "An Intellectual" speaks:

Out of the broken gospels, out of the desert,
 The parched, the shattered temples I heard a voice
 Chanting to a strident harp: *Oh, come, come in,
 Come in under the shadow of this red rock. . . .*
 Whither I come, and solace now my heart
 With necrological beauties more permanent
 In the round glitter of skulls and rondure of bones
 Than all the old disease of life.

To which the "Ego" of the poem reacts, condemning the distortion of history implied, such "negative freedoms." For time is redeemed when seen aright. Which seeing involves a beginning from where one is. Green hills lie

Where moonlight falls on honest grass
 And honest men who sleep or, waking, speak
 The tongue I speak and love.

Though "clocks will strike," time does not contain the past in the distorted manner of the Cleo passage of Eliot's "What the Thunder Said," in which

bats with baby faces in the violet light
Whistled, and beat their wings
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall . . .

In response to this passage from the *Waste Land*, Davidson writes:

With blithely tortured face he warps the night
In shooting lines. Convulsive blackness crimps
A blasted angular world where fungus growths
Knit pile on pile of horrible beauty splashed
With writhing human smiles.

The *Tall Men* is by a poet aware of himself as having been a soldier in France in World War I, an experience that stirred the mind to that blood knowledge of his own family's experiences in more ancient wars. Davidson's great-great grandfather's wife was captured by the Indians and carried into Canada and subsequently ransomed. One need hardly mention how closely aware Davidson was of his family's involvement in the American Civil War, but might recall the counterpoint in Eliot, the English Civil War, which is of more than passing relevance to Eliot's concern for the dissociation of sensibility and his early disaffection with Milton. One need hardly mention Davidson's unqualified commitment to literary and political principles he has never considered as ultimately lost causes, but needs reminding of Eliot's confusion, which is hinted at by his apologetic embarrassment on meeting Herbert Read in 1917, Read in uniform, Eliot an uncommitted civilian. (See Sir Herbert Read's "T. S. E.—A Memoir," *Sewanee Review* (Winter 1966, page 32). One might consider that much yet is to be said of the early Eliot, as is further indicated by Read's recalling him singing in London "in a mood of solemn gaiety" the ballad we Southerners call "The Unconstructed Rebel." Looking back on those years Eliot wrote Read in 1928:

"Some day . . . I want to write an essay about the point of view of an American who wasn't an American, because he was born in the South and went to school in New England as a small boy with a nigger drawl, but who wasn't a southerner in the South because his people were northerners in a border state and looked down on all southerners and Virginians, and who so was never anything anywhere and who

therefore felt himself to be more a Frenchman than an American and more an Englishman than a Frenchman and yet felt that the U. S. A. up to a hundred years ago was a family extension. It is almost too difficult even for H. J. who for that matter wasn't an American at all, in that sense." (*Sewanee Review*, Winter 1966, page 35.)

This, in the year in which *For Lancelot Andrews* was published with its now famous preface.

Davidson's clearer awareness of his origins carries a conviction in his poetry which he, and others, do not find in the literary conjuring of "Gerontion." From his personal action in World War I to the present day, Davidson has found himself daily involved with hollow, bloodless men in such an intimate way as to make his experience less speculative in its expression than Eliot's in *The Waste Land*. Engagement, freed of caution, tempts to excessiveness; there are some legitimate reservations to be made as to the literary merit of *The Tall Men*, though they are reservations implicitly recognized by the voice in the poem. Davidson himself advances criticism of his volume in *Fugitives' Reunion*. But reservations must be made on the basis of what the poem is, not according to what one wants it to be. Certainly the volume requires a critical perception keener than Stewart's when he concludes that the *Tall Men's* complexities "would have appealed to the readers of Zane Grey."

Thus Stewart's inclination to a wrong conclusion because of insufficient understanding or misread evidence keeps intruding upon one's patience as he reads *The Burden of Time*. A damning instance is the repeated insistence that the Fugitives were unaware of themselves as Southerners in their writing, a consideration introduced at times as if an apology for the Agrarian phase of Ransom and Warren in particular. Consider this statement of Stewart's theme:

. . . Ransom held most of the important tenets of the philosophy underlying his critical theories *before* he turned to thinking and writing on social problems. Even if one removed from his writing all mention of the Agrarian social image, his thought would still be all of a piece—so much so, indeed, that one can suppose that the parts which have importance for literature would have come into being in just about the same form without Agrarianism. (page 203)

But this is having it however Stewart will. Did parts come into being *after* Agrarianism; is Agrarianism compatible to those early tenets? Is Stewart suggesting that Agrarianism is an aberration in Ransom? The

truth is that Stewart doesn't like Agrarian ideas and is uncomfortable, sometimes angrily so, in their presence. One cannot write as he does above and reasonably conclude that it proves that "... scholars may overestimate the significance of Agrarianism" in Ransom's, Tate's, and Warren's work. Nor is it convincing to assert as if self-evident that, though Warren soaked up the South in his boyhood, the Southern material present in his poetry and fiction should not lead a reader to suppose that "the history of his own region meant more to Warren at this time than it actually did." One would not be entirely satisfied if the assertion were Warren's own, and certainly not when it is Stewart's. It is perhaps of some relevance to the art and polemics of Warren and Tate that they have their origins, as did Eliot, in a border state, but rather than moving East came South to Vanderbilt. This is by way of suggesting a point worthy of consideration, not an assertion as of factual conclusion. For I am forecautioned by the undocumented and unexplored assertions occurring too often in Stewart, sometimes presented as if established fact, as with his comment on the relevance of history to Warren's work, and sometimes as authoritative judgment requiring general assent, as in his reduction of Tate's essays and poems of the late 20's and early 30's to brilliant but chaotic utterances of a lively boy. On the Fugitive's early awareness of themselves, Stewart presents enough of the exchange in the early 20's between Davidson and the editors of *Poetry: a Magazine of Verse* to show his conclusions inadmissible. But admiring the work of Ransom and Warren, Stewart is bent on rescuing it from its regional foundations toward claiming it for world provincialism. His attempt is so confused and over-bold as to require our looking a bit more closely into the matter.

II

One of the fallacies in Stewart's study of his subject is his penchant for over-simplification. (And again I remind the reader that I am considering Stewart as typical of a widespread provincial view and not as exceptional.) He looks at an argument by Tate or Davidson or Ransom, an argument out of some historical social institution perhaps, cites evidence of corruption in that particular institution, and concludes both that the institution is indefensible and that the propounder of the argument is ignorant of the full history of the institution. "One thinks of the Enclosure Acts and wonders how much Tate really knew about life under the *haute noblesse* of a Europe whose virtues he claimed

for the South." One can arrive at such a naive distortion if he takes the evil of a system to be the whole, as the Agrarians did not, any more than they took the virtues to be the whole. And one may fail to see as well that a point propounded may be advanced primarily on its merit as it appeals to the reason, with history cited as secondary. Now such failure as Stewart's may be innocent or deliberate, but the result is almost inevitably to charge the abused argument with wanting "to turn back the clock." (One should remember Davidson's sharp insistence to the contrary in *The Tall Men*: "But clocks will strike.") When Stewart concludes that by 1930 Ransom, Tate, and Davidson were ignorant of English and European history, it is clear enough that he has considerably overstated his case, he depending upon his own shaky opinion, as in his questioning of Tate quoted above, rather than upon evidence.

When we look at Stewart himself as historian, we are made even more aware of inadequacy, for we see him presenting evidence which is pertinent to his investigation but drawing conclusions that are untenable in the light of the evidence he himself presents. If one goes one step further, he finds Stewart presenting partial evidence, some of it questionable, on the basis of which he judges the degree of knowledge possessed by the Fugitive-Agrarians. To illustrate this confusion, consider his preliminaries to a consideration of the Agrarian position. He begins by presenting the Old South as it really was, contending that there were two Old Souths, a conservative estimate to say the least. The one South was that of "reality," the other of "legend." Out of the conflicting existences came the recent burgeoning of Southern letters. But the Fugitives, Stewart has already contended, were unaware of this complexity until they were middle-aged boys. In the first place, as Stewart has shown in the initial chapters, a revolt against the moonlight and magnolia South was a gambit of the Fugitives as poets. In the second, Stewart is unable to deal adequately with the legend half of his complexity because he does not deal adequately with the reality half, depending in part on questionable sources. To say, in characterizing the legend, that "Thomas Moore and Byron had taught Southerners to pay lip-service to the classics" and that consequently Southern academies offered a curriculum that included "some Latin and Greek" is to distort the reality, as if Stewart's investigation extended no further than a reading of *Life on the Mississippi* and the Grangerford section of the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The

argument overlooks the firm classical foundations of, say, the University of Virginia and the University of Georgia. What a convenient simplification: otherwise Stewart might have felt required to go into the differences between two such institutions, Virginia's being more directly out of Renaissance England and Georgia's out of late 18th century New England. But such complexity would have upset the reality-legend halving of his cake. It requires no further pursuit of Stewart's legend concerning the role of the classics in Southern education than to quote the Trustee Minutes of the University of Georgia (an institution founded by Yale men and modeled after that school). In the first quarter of the 19th century a student was allowed to enter, after academy training or private tutoring presumably, only if he was able "to read, translate, and parse Cicero, Virgil, and the Greek Testament, and to write true Latin in prose." Commencement exercises, according to the published programs, included formal orations by the students in French, Latin, and Greek. (See E. Merton Coulter, *College Life in the Old South*, page 35). The classical languages unquestionably continued to be at the center of formal education in the South through World War I, as the attempts of the New England missionaries indicate, they devoting considerable energy after 1865 to teaching the newly-freed helpless Negro Latin and Greek. (See Willard Range's *Rise and Progress of Negro Colleges in Georgia*, Part I.) The importance of classical training to the Fugitive-Agrarian movement is testified to in some detail by the principals themselves in *Fugitives' Reunion*, a document which Stewart fails to avail himself of at points of his study where it would be helpful. Their direct testimony, recorded in May of 1956, particularly in the final symposium, embodies remarks by several of the group recalling their awakening in words quite contrary to Stewart's assertions.¹

Also inadmissible as authority is Stewart's introduction of the frontiersman Patrick Henry, who is cited to prove that the literary culture of the Southern planter came "from conversation, not from reading" (page 100). Again, the argument conveniently ignores the importance of such figures as William Byrd, John Randolph, and Thomas Jefferson. For, though all plantation owners were not versed in Western culture through direct familiarity with the languages of that culture's literature, many were; and those too are a part of the reality. Each age, each region has its dream of the Great Society that leads to romanticizing, and the romanticizing in the Old South was in large part by the frontier

and Deep South parvenu who, like Sutpen, strives to emulate the Virginia Gentleman, though his women tend to pursue Heaven in the manner prescribed by New England Puritanism as injected by Wesleyan enthusiasm. The Virginia Gentleman was consequently a more considerable reality and power than Twain's presentation through the Grangerfords allows, or than Stewart is aware of. For dreams do have immediate social and political consequences, even as have ideas, from which one should be able to profit if critically alert. Tate, for instance, argued in 1935 ("The Profession of Letters in the South") that pioneering "became our way of industrial expansion, a method of production not special to us." Earlier (in "Remarks on the Southern Religion," 1930) he examines the development in the South before 1860 of what might properly be called agricultural industrialism, the appearance on the plantation scene of the precursors of Henry Ford. As Puritanism contributed to materialism in the East, to the discomfort of a Hawthorne, so did general Protestant evangelicalism in the South. The result: a destructive use of human energy and the land in the final interest of exchangeable commodity, Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley having finally been made pragmatic instruments. Such complexities of history lie under Southern literature from the superficial observations of Twain, through the weak voice of protest in Sidney Lanier, to the profounder readings of the Fugitive Agrarians, and of William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor. Curiously, Stewart charges Tate with being unaware of the particular phenomenon of industrial expansion as applied to the plantation, while actually producing a portion of Tate's essay (on page 126) which clearly shows that awareness. As Agrarians Tate and Davidson in particular began to say again and again, in defining values from the past worthy of survival, that it is a misunderstanding to suppose that the spirit of the New South, as exemplified in Henry Grady, is a Post-Bellum development: the New South spirit is an old inclination freshly directed toward old ends. Eli Whitney proved to be the Deep South's Henry Ford: what Grady was subsequently interested in was a multiplicity of such minds to help attract capital, which capital could find advantage in the labor that had been abruptly divorced from the exhausted land. In other words, the old evil—worldliness—turned old means in a new direction. Its effect upon the religious and cultural life of the South was, and has continued to be, of primary concern to Tate.² One might consider him, in this respect, an angry and articulate Young Goodman Brown,

whose initiation into the dark mysteries came quite early, as did the commitment he made as a consequence. In this respect he differs from Eliot, with whom he has many affinities.

III

The New South Spirit began to move relentlessly during the final decades of the 19th century, a new religious crusade led with fervor by Henry Grady, the tone of whose sermons on materialism has ever since colored Southern politics. Grady's ringing words to the North, delivered on one of his invasions, sound very like Khrushchev's more recent boastings about burying industrial America. "We are going to make a noble revenge . . . by invading every inch of your territory with iron."⁸ Thus the transubstantiation of the Old Deep South into the New. The pressure of merely surviving that led to such bold words left little room for or interest in ends. An occasional weak voice was raised.

"O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert dead!
The Time needs heart—'tis tired of head:
We're all for love," the violins said.

But Lanier's violins are hardly suited to the task that requires a John the Baptist. That Henry Grady's threat has been accomplished is nowhere more adequately illustrated than in the pained protest of the then Senator John F. Kennedy in "New England and the South: The Struggle for Industry" (*Atlantic Monthly*, January 1954). His strong objections to the South's economic advantages at mid-twentieth century will certainly require future historians to consider that concern as it relates to his subsequent political biography. Certainly the public concern for the South's moral estate has strong economic undercurrents. It is equally certain that the New South philosophy has proved as little concerned with human dignity as was the infamous New England textile magnate's or the Deep South Simon Legree's. Unquestionably, the imitation by many prewar planters of a Jefferson or a Randolph was a token imitation, but in the same culturally and spiritually destructive manner as the magnates' and financiers' purchase of European art with a dream of refrigerating it in public mausoleums, the White House itself having recently served that end. The New South spirit turned towards imitating the Rockefellers and Goulds, while our Protestant fervor captured Rotary and Lion's Clubs. We are now,

like the rest of the country, pretty well caught up in imitating the Joneses. For with the cry of Progress, we set ourselves on the road (in Jack Kerouac's now famous phrase for end-less motion). Indeed, because there were no ends considered beyond the acquisition of power (both financial and political power having been unjustly seized from the South) one could expect the accomplishment of little more than affluent aimlessness. It is an aimlessness characterized by the sophisticated concern for literature and art divorced of its past and removed from the present into a compartment: a small segment of the Sunday paper's "entertainment" section. There plays are promoted like circuses. Books are celebrated because they are just published, topical, timely.

The point of this castigation, which will hold for the general cultural concern of the region, with particular exceptions, is to call attention to what are still, after thirty or forty years, acute observations by the Agrarians on the causes of our regional decay into provincialism. Tate's essay, "Remarks on Southern Religion" (1930), is far more cogent than Stewart's denigration of it makes it appear when he caricatures it as dealing with "a fabulous North and a blundering monster called Protestantism." A reader must refer to the essay itself to see Tate's awareness of the effects upon the South of the secular, utilitarian spirit in it and then compare Tate's observations with his own of the immediate South. But one must do so, remembering that Tate's concern is, like Dante's and Eliot's, *with the effect on the individual soul of its own will and acts*. For effects are never the proper center of spiritual attention, though they often indicate false centers. One might consider this last proposition by observing the consequences of that force of the popular will in our society that has turned us to things as an end, the final effect of which is to turn the individual into a thing. (A pertinent analysis of this development is Eliseo Vivas' "Things and Persons," *Modern Age*, Spring 1965.)

From the beginning the Fugitives were aware of the complexity of modern industrial society, whose easy dream of cultural salvation was the importation of European art and literature, the extension of which dream is the television set in every home. The literal transportation of a castle by a moneyed man is followed by a group effort to preserve the movie set of Tara used in *Gone with the Wind*. Ransom, returned from World War I, wrote a poem called "Old Mansion," displaying the expatriate Southerner come home with a veneer of European sophistication upon his sensibility, a poem in its searchings

into national provincialism much akin to the searchings one finds in Henry James, a spirit both Tate and Ransom have found congenial. Aware of the national provincialism, the Fugitives were aware as well of that local provincialism which misappropriated and distorted its regional substance, particularly in the interest of "business." Davidson wrote to the editors of *Poetry* in 1923: "We fear to have too much stress laid on a tradition that may be called a tradition only when looked at through the haze of a generous imagination."

The "haze of a generous imagination" is close to the center of Ransom's and Davidson's objections to *The Waste Land*, and much of the burden of the colloquy between the two older men and Tate, then in the East, revolves around it. Their debate is a working out of the complexities of tradition's relation to the individual talent and to society. The poet, examining the poem itself, even though he might attempt to ignore the clash between the Old and New South daily about him, in the Nashville business world or in the persons of Edwin Mims and Chancellor Kirkland at Vanderbilt University, moves inevitably to larger concerns unless he withdraws into what Warren was to characterize later as "pure poetry." Davidson sees the cultural frenzy of town pursuing business and asks

Why do they come? What do they seek
Who build but never read their Greek?
("On a Replica of the Parthenon")

What he, and the other Fugitive-Agrarians (Warren, Tate, Ransom), were doing was working out from a center—themselves as poets—to those larger concerns. Emerging into the harsh world of their own Reconstruction Period (and Stewart unwisely negates the importance of World War I on the group), they came to recognize themselves as possessed of a kind of traditionalism which, because of the peculiar advantage of their cultural origins and personal history, was unlike Eliot's, being less abstract, less bookish. While Eliot sought to restore what was lost, the Fugitives found themselves engaged in assimilating to art and argument what was still at hand but rapidly being lost. One representation of the difference I mean: contrast the sense of family one finds in the Fugitives and in their poetry to that loneliness of Eliot, and Pound as well. What the fortunate coincidence of the Fugitives' origins and encounter mean to their development can be found well-stated in Davidson's "Thankless Muse and Her Fugitive Poets" (*South-*

ern Writers in the Modern World). One need only contrast the analogous writings of many of the expatriates to see a difference. In contrast to the Fugitives' encounter, it is as if Eliot and Pound attempt to choose their origins by an act of the will, through essay and art. Another indication is the history of these poets' movements: from St. Louis to London, from Idaho to Italy. The contrast serves to underline the advantage the Fugitives had: an anchor in reality that might prevent their intellectual lives ever to divorce from the present time and place and float away too easily into past glories.

While protesting the same decay that Eliot and Pound find in the modern world, the Fugitives do so from a point of different vantage. The immediate result is often a difference in literary mode, as between Ransom's "Captain Carpenter" and Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," for instance. Ransom sees, with a generous recognition of the weaknesses involved, a spirit which is nevertheless necessary to the modern world (as God's Fools always are); it is a spirit doomed by the world, but honorable, courageous, capable of an ultimate commitment against an overwhelming evil that costs "not less than everything." Eliot's poem, on the other hand, characterizes the poverty of a spirit who laments sadly being "at times almost the Fool." In Ransom's mode instead of a disembodied consciousness afloat in modern vacuums and defined by old signs and allusions, the poem functioning as an indirect commentary, there is a praising of foolish involvement in lost causes. Because there is a realism in Ransom's view which makes him aware that good causes are generally lost in the immediate world, the poet himself may possess a moderation necessary to his own involvement in the world. Ransom's poetry shows a poet less defeated than Eliot's poetry, at least up to Eliot's commitment to Augustine's city over the "Unreal City" that London stands for. Ransom is characteristically less elegaic than Eliot. More dramatic. Nor yet is he as rashly and harshly innocent as Pound in *Maubertley* and the early *Cantos*, who shaking the dirt of London and Paris from his feet in pursuit of a Utopian city he calls Dioce, loses touch with the world, till that overwhelming shock which is registered in the *Pisan Cantos*.

The self-awareness among the Fugitives helps a Davidson relate his experience in European trenches to Thermopylae, Hastings, Buchanan's Station, Appomattox, and feel confident as well that the world is not lost to Eliot's Prufrock or Pound's Mr. Nixon. Nor lost to the Sweeneys or the Grishkins as simply conceived as they are in Eliot's

portraiture. (One might note that in the *Pisan Cantos* Pound agrees, commenting on "Grishkin's photo refund years after / with the feeling that Mr. Eliot may have / missed something, after all, in composing his vignette.") For Davidson looks to the future with expectations not unlike those one finds more recently expressed in Harrison Brown's scientific analysis of our prospect in *The Challenge of Man's Future* (1954), a work to which I shall later return. It is usual to find such concerns treated by the new provincial spirit such as Stewart's as being a nostalgic looking to the past, for that new spirit is so immersed in the present moment that past and future are easily confused. Sadly, this emersion in the present moment is not of that high order of commitment that Eliot came to in the *Four Quartets*, a Stewart being rather drowned in present time than drowned out of it. More Phlebas than Heraclitus.

In considering the Fugitives' good fortune of origin and encounter, one should look somewhat closely at their city. Nashville in the 1920's was approximately the size of Pericles' Athens or Dante's Florence or Chaucer's London. Academy, city, country were close and often hardly distinguishable. The circumstances did not dictate or encourage isolation. Davidson remembers that "it was possible then for a young Southern poet to pass from university to city, from city to university, without any great sense of shock." In *Fugitives' Reunion* it is made abundantly evident that such travel was possible within the university itself, among the various departments, in a way scarcely possible then in the large Eastern schools or since in any university one can name, *largeness* having become synonymous with *greatness*, thus providing the multiversity. Tate, distinguishing Fugitives from other literary groups of the time to be found in the universities of the East, says of those groups in contrast to the Fugitives,

They were not groups in our sense, being associated only through the university and having a cosmopolitan range of interest without, I think, a simple homogenous background which they could take with them to the university where it might suffer little or no break in continuity. I would call the Fugitives an intense and historical group as opposed to the eclectic and cosmopolitan groups that flourished in the East.

Their being an "intense and historical group" committed them to the realities of the present in a way that has been facilely denied and

unjustly described with the perjorative "academic," in the 20's by Chancellor Kirkland and now most recently by Stewart.

One of the present realities they were committed to was the diversity of personality and talent within the group. It is one of the remarkable aspects of the Fugitives that their growth as poets still allowed them to be generous-spirited even in the midst of heated debate among themselves over the merit of a phrase or an aesthetic principle. By way of contrast, recall the bitter squabble that developed among the Imagists, or the egocentric, jealous, self-promoting climate of the Paris circle that included McAlmon, Hemingway, Stein, Fitzgerald, and lesser lights. A Davidson or a Tate, respecting individual identity and peculiar talent, at once defined, by his concern, both his independence of and his relation to the other identity. What this means to aesthetic argument and critical evaluation can be readily seen by comparing the debate between Tate and Davidson (see Chapter Eight of Louise Cowan's *The Fugitive Group*) to Pound's attack on "Amygism" or his general correspondence with William Carlos Williams in the late 1920's and after. Where there is ample evidence of diversity of poetics in the Davidson-Tate exchange, there is little evidence of any power struggle. The question isn't whose knowledge is legitimate or absolute, but rather

What shall we do who have knowledge
Carried to the heart?

They were effective, then, as a group, resisting vigorously being cast in the role of their Southern predecessors in letters, whether narrow "pure poetry" technicians like Edgar Allan Poe, plantation romantics like Thomas Nelson Page, or New South apologists like Walter Hines Page. (On the eventual expense of this resistance, to the group itself, see Richard Weaver's "Agrarianism in Exile," *Sewanee Review*, Autumn 1950.) Nor were they less relentless in opposing those who abandoned the past so totally as William Carlos Williams attempted in his first panic over *The Waste Land* or the puzzled and wandering Ernest Hemingway, whose refuge from the complexities of existence was style.

The Fugitives' concern for balance among individuals led to a concern for balance in the individual's society. Hence their inevitable objections to specialization as exhibited by the inordinate worship of science and technology. A parallel objection was to the belief that "poetry is an

essence that is to be located at some particular place in a poem, or some particular event." The greater poets, Warren argued, are "impure" because they make a larger, doomed attempt "to remain faithful to the complexities of the problems with which they are dealing, because they have refused to take an easy statement as solution, because they have tried to define the context in which, and the terms by which, faith and ideals may be earned." ("Pure and Impure Poetry," 1942) Though late in Warren's statement of it, relative to the history of the Fugitive-Agrarian development, it is a principle in the early poetry of the group. As poets, they were committed to those political, economic, and aesthetic complexities that allowed no easy program. They must, as Davidson said in "Sanctuary," "Go further on. Go high. Go deep."⁴

IV

It is now time to consider the effects upon the Fugitives of their going further, higher, deeper into the complexities of existence as it revealed itself to them in the 1920's and to consider the validity of their vision. As we have noted, the modern concern for the Complete Man, a concern much remarked in Conrad, Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Huxley, Hemingway, led the Fugitives out of themselves toward a concern for the diversity of society itself and toward a concern for man as hero rather than as victim. As Davidson puts it, again in "The Thankless Muse and Her Fugitive Poets," "the natural step was to remember that after all we were Southerners and that the South still possessed at least the remnants . . . of a traditional believing society." The fruit of this remembering was the symposium *I'll Take My Stand* (1930), which was not a blanket condemnation of industrialism in favor of agrarianism, nor a condemnation of science in favor of the poet, as its early (and late) antagonists took it to be. The Agrarian position, as Ransom's "Statement of Principles" makes clear, was one of moderation, one in fact opposed to extremism, though its opponents, depending upon that native credulity which leads us to pursue *Progress* with the talisman *New* (whether followed by *South*, *Bread*, or *Razor Blades*), charged the Agrarians with wanting to return to a feudal society. The falsification of the stated position was easy since, given their moderate position (sometimes hidden in the confusion of debate, as when Ransom met Stringfellow Barr in Richmond in the Fall of 1930), there could be no program of action. Stewart makes this absence of a program, the failure

to provide a how-to solution, one of the two principal general failures of the Agrarian position. He might well have cited the Fugitive William Y. Elliott to support his point. It is Elliott, in *Fugitives' Reunion*, who expresses strong regret that the Agrarians did not make an effort to gain actual political power through those "Tracts Against Communism," the title Warren preferred to *I'll Take My Stand*.

A falsification of the Agrarian position itself, and of the subsequent attitudes of the principal figures in the movement, has been deliberately continued. Note as a glaring instance, since it had such generous acceptance by the public, Ralph McGill's *The South and the Southerner*. If one compares Mr. McGill's chapter on the Vanderbilt group with the transcript of the final session of the Fugitives' reunion, it becomes evident that McGill is no more adequate as historian than as literary critic, though he includes in his chapter as well a superficial evaluation of Allen Tate as poet. Stewart, unfortunately swept along by the same popular wave of the Utopian present as are Bradbury and McGill, concludes that "The importance of Agrarianism . . . comes almost entirely from its relation to the imagination and critical writings of some members of the group." It is a comment short of the mark, though less bigoted and perverse than McGill's presumably deliberate falsification that, after its publication, "There was a determined effort to forget *I'll Take My Stand*," and that by 1933, "Only Donald Davidson stood on the burned-out deck." One need only remark the publication in 1936 of a second symposium, edited by Allen Tate and Herbert Agar: *Who Owns America: A New Declaration of Independence*. The collection contained essays by Tate, Warren, Ransom, Davidson, Lanier, Owsley, Lytle, Wade—all of whom had contributed to *I'll Take My Stand*.

Stewart concludes that, "Looking back one sees those who continued in The Cause as caretakers of an abandoned estate." He cites Ransom's comment that his essay, "The South Is a Bulwark" is a "last act of patriotism," and concludes from this that Ransom showed "disaffection" with the cause. But as late as 1962, reviewing Davidson's new collection of poems, *The Long Street*, in the *Sewanee Review*, Ransom comments on the old cause as continued by Davidson with warm admiration. "But my admiration does not quite become emulation; there is a defect in my temper." These are hardly the words of "disaffection." They are more nearly an expression of self-disappointment. A more careful consideration of the complexities of the Agrarians' confrontation of the modern

world would nevertheless show, I believe, that Ransom was not abandoning a position, but shifting his point of attack. Is not Ransom's literary criticism one facet of a general attack upon Leviathan of which Davidson's social and political criticism is another? Certainly such an essay as "The Concrete Universal" indicates Thomas Hobbes as a point of attack as does Davidson's examination of Charles Beard. It is premature to conclude that the effects of Agrarianism on Ransom are accidental, as Stewart does, just as it is the height of folly to conclude as he does that the principles of Agrarian debate were dead issues by 1936. The whole complex of urban problems show far otherwise: juvenile delinquency, urban renewal, unemployment, leisure time on the hands of bored masses, and the general psychological effect of alienation concomitant in our structureless society with the condensation of population.

At the heart of the decay is the destruction of the institution most basic to Agrarian tenets, as it has been basic to the civilization of the West since Homer: the family as a stabilizing element of society. Even as I write, there is in the public prints much excitement over the Moynihan Report, which concerns itself with the causes of big city riots. Using Census Bureau statistics as a foundation, Mr. Moynihan (at the time of the report's compilation an assistant secretary of labor) came up with the startling and alarming conclusion that the Negro family has so far broken down as to be the elementary problem to be solved before any final "solution" to the Negro problem is to be accomplished. At the heart of the matter is the failure of the father as authority and the emergence of the mother as dominant figure. While such a development might suit a Robert Graves, it hardly accords with the desires of a Davidson or Ransom. These effects were foretold long since by Lytle and Davidson, and one remarks as well that Captain Carpenter is not the poet's version of Dagwood Bumstead.⁵

In the 1950's and 1960's philosophers, scientists, and literary men are engaged with the problems anticipated by the Agrarians in the 1920's and 1930's. A sampling of the evidence to indicate the immediacy of the problems might well start with the controversial debate between the humanities and sciences engendered anew by C. P. Snow's *Two Cultures* (shades of the Fugitive-Chancellor Kirkland conflict). Painfully pertinent as well are the examinations of our world by Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition*, by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World Revisited*; by the prophecies of Norbert Wiener's *Cybernetics*, Rachel

Carson's *Silent Spring*, and Howard R. Lewis's *With Every Breath You Take*. The proliferation of scientific books on the mechanics of society, of literary and philosophical books on the decay of the concept of the hero or analysis of our relativistic concepts of treason and honor cry out to us from the paperback stands. We pray that the individual is victim, society the oppressive victor; for only then is there any salving of that personal social guilt we've been too easily convicted of. Still the problems rear themselves as the very monsters that Davidson, Tate, Ransom, Lytle, Warren, and Owsley foretold. Near panic results in the nation, as indicated by the rapid multiplication of government- and foundation-financed commissions that tinker and speculate on national, state, and local levels, predicting miracles through the multitude of loaves and fishes commandeered from the public. Indeed, there is such a groping of government-supported minds with the obstacles to the continuation of our civilization that the times want an army of Voltaires. How else deal with such absurdities as government support of Leroi Jones' militant racist theater alongside the public examination of the Ku Klux Klan? How else deal with the pursuit of equality of opportunity through preferential treatment or Secretary of Labor Wirtz's suppression of the Moynihan Report, the evidence it contains being common to the open eye for thirty years at least? In consequence of the confusion about us, the simplified version of Agrarianism reported to us by writers like Bradbury, Stewart, and McGill must be accounted either innocent delusion, disqualifying these spokesmen from our respectful attention, or deliberate betrayal, qualifying them for our strongest rebuke.

As feared by the Agrarians, we have now established in position of absolute power, amid the disintegration of our moral, spiritual, and intellectual fiber, the naive new religion embodied in the local tag "New South," our version of the perennial Great Society. Nor does there seem to be anywhere in a position of effective authority an awareness of the compatibility of chaos and old night with the vagueness of this announced millennium. We have abandoned the spirit and thought of that "Athenian Gentleman" (as Ransom called Aristotle in those Fugitive days), who was concerned with order at a point in history so much like our own. For we are in an age which is at once decaying, as Athens decayed before the frustrated eyes of Euripides, and giving birth to a new paganism such as the world has never before imagined. A *Medea* announced intellectual and spiritual confusions as

to man's place in the world whose consequence was the destruction of Athens as subsequently catalogued by Thucydides. Euripides, however, does not argue Medea innocent of murder as she slays her own sons in the name of justice and in the face of what she recognizes as her "better reason." It has remained for our age to declare, in the name of justice, that Medea is innocent: the second U. S. Court of Appeals in March of 1966 established as a precedent of jurisprudence, that a person is not responsible for criminal conduct if, even though he knows an act to be wrong, he cannot control his behavior.

We are excitedly frantic over immediate effects of our new powers to change nature, exuberant over the prospects of willfully changing human nature, not only through social experiments but through the prospects of electric cathodes implanted in the human brain, selective evolution through DNA acids, and education through RNA acid injected to take the place of lectures and reading.⁶ The recent Eternals—the Dynamo, Evolution, Determinism—are now reduced by their offspring—Cybernetics, Controlled DNA Molecules, and Planned Economy—like Cronus overthrown by Zeus. To the new gods we refer, not the cycles of life in nature and the mysteries of mind as in the Old Paganism, but the annually acquired car, clothes, house, and improved tranquilizers. The symbol for worship in this brave new world? Man on the Moon, to replace the chaste huntress and the old conjunctions of Venus and Mars. The National Space Administration becomes the priesthood of the new Eleusinian mysteries, whose Persephone's nature is mechanical mind, mechanical body. We tithe New Gemini. Is it perhaps somehow relevant that we have chosen to call ours the Age of Anxiety. Without ends, how appropriate that our most celebrated accomplishment is to send our hero integers circling the earth for days with almost perfect mechanical precision. And while a splinter of formal philosophers and theologians announce that God is dead, how revealing our awe when Gemini 8 fails, as if we are suddenly confronted by diabolical miracle.

Concerning the line of ascent in the South towards such strange gods, the New South movement sought those gods through messiahs like Henry Grady, whose tribe has increased like the division of cells. One inevitable consequence was that we too should lose a concern for ends. Abandoning the past for the present, we abandoned as well a desire for and power of foresight, which power and desire make possible to the ears the larger prophecies of the future. The Fugitive-

Agrarians objected to the destruction of a philosophical pursuit of science and the humanities, themselves preferring as values the development of the individual's mind and spirit to the pragmatic program resulting from the teachings of William James and John Dewey. What has resulted from that lost battle, as a careful look at any of the larger institutions of education will show, is the pursuit of utilitarian service to the body and medical service to the mind: the pursuit is expressed in the general shibboleth of "adjustment to the modern world," through "science" and "social studies." The initial battles between the Fugitives and the authorities at Vanderbilt were on these very battlegrounds, with Peabody Institute next door serving as an advance outpost of the enemy. Later, in the Agrarian phase, the attack was shifted against the regionally established temples: the Birmingham Mills and T.V.A. But the attacks have not been very effective since, in the new idolatry, the means have been so pervasively established as ends, and there are consequently no suitable definitions of economic failure and social upheaval. The past is presented as dark and abandoned, the future diffuse with a magic radiance that intimidates the eye. But the fundamental end, once held inviolate, is long since lost. As Tate pointed out in 1930, in an essay Stewart characterizes as silly, the shift has been from a concern for individual salvation—whether that of the balanced intellect of Aristotle's concern or the purified soul of Dante's—to a concern for the salvation of Society, which salvation is superstitiously said to guarantee the individual. But in fact the reduced end has served to destroy the individual. The crippled creature that is each of us will not be soothed by the spectacle of Gemini as an annunciation of new Godhead, nor with Society as the true Second Coming, when we see the final economic and educational destructions advanced now in the name of the general good.

But putting aside the divine namings of godhead—Society plus Pure and Social Sciences equals Great Society—let us look at our situation as presented by a scientist in a work endorsed by William O. Douglas and Albert Einstein among others. Harrison Brown warns us, in *The Challenge of Man's Future*, of imminent collapse: either we must undertake such measures as absolute control of the birthrate, going perhaps to a system of regional quotas, and then go on to solve our industrial-urban problems through scientific formulae (brave new world indeed) or a general collapse will return us to those dark ages horrors of agrarianism and the sweat of the brow. (He concedes that, in spite

of the much-feared sweat, the meanness and nobility of the individual soul would have a chance to reassert itself.) Looking to the future, having studied "Vital Statistics" relevant to the human condition at mid-century, in particular "Food," "Energy," and "Things," he comes to "Patterns of the Future" deduced from the accumulated evidence (page 264):

. . . . we see the possibility of the emergence of any of three possible patterns of life. The first and by far the most likely pattern is a reversion to agrarian existence. This is a pattern which will almost certainly emerge unless man is able to abolish war, unless he is able to make the transition involving the utilization of new energy sources, and unless he is able to stabilize populations . . . there is a possibility that stabilization can be achieved, that war can be avoided, and that resource transition can be successfully negotiated. In that event, mankind will be confronted with a pattern which looms on the horizon of events as the second most likely possibility—the completely controlled, collectivized industrial society.

The third possibility confronting mankind is that of the world-wide free industrial society in which human beings can live in reasonable harmony with their environment. It is unlikely that such a pattern can ever exist for long.

In the midst of such huge concerns as these, with which the Agrarians were much engaged, Stewart can say with assurance that "The New South has come to pass and it has turned out to be much better than the Agrarians had prophesied," words indeed spoken as if there were no tomorrow. One might as well, if he were a Ransom or a Davidson or a Tate instead of Harrison Brown, point to profound minds of the past: to a Pericles and his high assurances to Athens of its continuing glory as the *Medea* was being presented and the Peloponnesian War was getting under way, or to a Virgil's ringing confidence that Rome had accomplished what Brown says we must so that New Troy would last forever.⁷ And a Tate would cite, instead of Brown's despondent final sentence quoted above, a traditionalist with ancient foundations who said, as a great beginning, ". . . here have we no continuing city." (*Hebrews* 13:14)

What then shall we do who have such knowledge carried to the heart? Before Eliot sings in *The Rock* "if the Temple is to be cast down / We must first build the Temple," the Fugitives were well started upon their Agrarian phase. Whatever Ransom, Davidson, Tate, and Warren were, they can certainly not be justly charged with being Utopians,

expecting the iron gates to be closed on war or any society to continue perpetually. But with such happy intellectual innocence as to suppose them such, Stewart treats the importance of the Scopes Trial to the ideas and art of the Fugitive-Agrarians. He says that, though Clarence Darrow "made a fool of William Jennings Bryan, the Spokesman for the Fundamentalists, Scopes was found guilty," as if the verdict were a gross miscarriage of legal justice. One must read Richard Weaver's analysis of the trial's arguments, in *The Ethics of Rhetoric*, to see the fundamental issue of that trial. For the issue was not Fundamentalism versus the true and lively word of science, as Stewart supposes it; the same legislature which outlawed the teaching of evolution as scientific dogma had also outlawed the teaching of the Bible in the public schools. Weaver shows conclusively that Bryan's position was a dialectical one, the position of a responsible intellect, while Darrow's was indefensibly a rhetorical one, which exactly reversed his recent position as defense in the Leopold case. Far from arguing the Scopes case on its legal merits, and far from being involved on principle, as subsequent romantic treatments of Darrow's role would have it, Darrow distorted the issue for public consumption, centering his attention more on the journalists than on the jury. Bryan's blunder was, of course, precisely parallel to that of Meletus of Plato's *Apology*, in which famous trial scene Socrates is himself guilty of rhetorical evasion of the fundamental issue; namely, whether he, Socrates, had in fact violated the law (a curious circumstance for Plato to cast his teacher in, considering the burden of the *Crito*). Bryan, in allowing himself to be sworn as an expert on the Bible (as Meletus allowed Socrates to examine him as an expert on education), abandoned the real issue in favor of the circus performance that so amused the nation. Thus Darrow shifted the argument, through clever manipulation of emotion through emotional horseplay, from the issue of whether a law had been violated to the question of whether the particular law was a just one or not. Thus he made mockery of the legislative branch of government, whose concern it is by definition of our system, to correct the unjust law. Rhetorical abuses by the demagogue, characteristically expected in executive and legislative pursuits of elective offices, were shifted at Dayton to the judicial realm, though the presiding judge did not allow the shift to pass unchallenged, as the transcript of that trial shows. Through the journalistic distortions of the trial by people like H. L. Mencken, there came a confusion in the popular mind whose fruits are coming

to harvest now with disturbing insistence: an instance is the doctrine that a private citizen has a legal (as opposed to moral) right to define what law is applicable to him. The doctrine of preferential treatment, instead of equal treatment, currently discussed as a necessary mode of correction of old social wrongs, is the inevitable consequence, and is indeed not a proposal but an accomplished fact, as the close inspection of federal institutions will illustrate. How those fruits turn ashes should be sufficiently indicated by the Birmingham Bombings and the Los Angeles Riots, effects as directly out of such causes as the Dayton Trial as American materialism is the result of Puritanism translated to Jamesean pragmatism. Typically, in searching for solutions to the racial problem, we look too narrowly at race. We fail to see that the concern for a breakdown in the Negro family's stability, which the Moynihan Report discovers, is more generally applicable than we are willing to admit and that political, social, and economic forces older than Franklin Delano Roosevelt or Lyndon B. Johnson strike deep into the issues. As Hawthorne pondered New England Puritanism, as Henry James pondered it—looking closely at Hawthorne and then at the emerging industrial society, finally from sanctuary in England—as Eliot pondered both Hawthorne's and James' reaction to changing America, himself early a refugee to England; so must we ponder, considering theirs and the Fugitive-Agrarian arguments and any others pertinent to our present confused situation. Lord Acton, examining "The Civil War in America: Its Place in History" some few months after Appomatox, said:

The voice of European civilization, and the voice of the past alike, come to [the Americans] from another world. History is filled with records of resistance provoked by the abuse of power. But whereas in the old world the people produce the remedy, in America they produce the cause of the disease. There is no appeal from the people to itself. After having been taught for years that its will ought to be law, it cannot learn the lesson of self-denial and renounce the exercise of the power it has enjoyed.

A little earlier, Lord Macaulay, in an address to America, warned:

Your republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the Twentieth Century as the Roman Empire was in the Fifth; with this difference; that the Huns and Vandals who ravaged the Roman Empire came from without and your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country, by your own institutions.

Frightening prophecy, this, in our Age of Anxiety, where inadequate means masquerade as ends: minimum wage or social security which are sold to the people by the government (who is the people) in cartoons, on television, and on post office walls. In an age in which items of manufacture are tranquilizers and ashtrays built to shatter when hurled against wall or floor to relieve tension, we should not be surprised by Molotov cocktails today against store walls from within which one bought food yesterday. Nor the subsequent tranquil dream of manna from government-operated skies tomorrow when statistical studies of the Watts area by economists and psychiatrists commend the operation. Nor is that individual, isolated maniac, daily reported in the papers, a less telling sign than the mob gone mad, though Manlius and the Sacred Geese of the Press seldom sound that alarm except in pursuit of a reader's easy tears or appropriations.

Because Stewart has underestimated, among other things, the strength of Greek and Roman culture in the South, and in Ransom, Davidson, and Tate in particular, he fails to clarify the importance of the Scopes trial to the Agrarian development. As it stands, the issue was far more fundamental than whether man is cousin to the monkey, which is what the journalists made of it and what it continues to represent in the excitable public mind. The trial was symptomatic of what was at stake—orderly government itself. And Ransom, whose training in Tennessee led him to concentrate on the Age of Pericles and Augustan Rome during his days at Oxford, could see that the decay of Athens described by Thucydides and of Rome by Suetonius, Plutarch, and Petronius was immediately relevant to the world whose center for him in the 1920's was Nashville, Tennessee. Ransom's vision of that world allowed him to deal directly with its immediate pressures and maintain his integrity as a poet. The sense of balance in his poetry—of idea to reality, of logical form to metrical, of particular concrete to general universal—owes a great deal to his training as philosopher, particularly to his study of the Greeks. Since Stewart does not adequately evaluate Ransom's knowledge of that civilization which extends to us from the Greeks and Romans and from old England, it is inevitable that he fail to do justice to Ransom's poetry, as we shall now see. In concluding with a consideration of one of Ransom's poems as it presents itself and as Stewart takes it, I intend to imply how intimately related are Ransom's critical, creative, and polemical aspects and demonstrate with Ransom as exemplum a complexity that Stewart has not

adequately dealt with in his treatment of the major figures of the Fugitive-Agrarian movement.

V

In the hundred pages devoted specifically to Ransom's poetry and criticism, Stewart never satisfactorily integrates the background material explored in his first four chapters to determine how far and deep and high Ransom has gone. This assertion can be substantiated by reference to his evaluation of Ransom's "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter." An early warning of the inadequacy of his study as literary criticism is the comment on this poem (on page 56) that here "Ransom skillfully manipulates stock figures and attitudes to ridicule the sentimental idealizing of childhood," as if the poem were satire. (The comment seems a distorted reduction of Warren's careful analysis of the poem in "Pure and Impure Poetry.") In pages 220 to 222, Stewart explicates the poem in more detail, commenting on the confusion brought to the orderly adult world of the poem by the child's activities, she being a "non-conformist" to that world. "We are puzzled by the tone," he says, but the brief mention of diction and meter doesn't help solve the puzzle. A conclusion is reached about the poem however: "Ransom makes us look beyond the image of the storybook and valentine to a real little girl, who might be living next door." Stewart gets no further with an explanation of the poem's effectiveness because he discards as not pertinent certain clues, and neglects the relevance of background already prepared in the first half of his book. Tate remarked, in conversations recorded in *Fugitives' Reunion*, that the influence of the Greeks on Ransom's work is far more subtle than on his or Davidson's work. Even that "Athenian Gentleman," Aristotle, who in his own way was full of Ransom's "fury against abstractions" divorced of concretes, must not be dismissed as influence because of an occasional specific and limited objection to him by Ransom in later critical essays. And in addition to the classical influence, one must remember as well his early critical argument with Tate over Eliot's poetry, a debate central to Ransom's aesthetic interests. The debate is discussed as history in the early chapters but unaccountably neglected in the pages on Ransom as poet and critic.

Ransom's examination of Eliot's early poetry led him to conclude, as he wrote Tate, that there was a failure of form in "poem after poem." He wrote Tate also his conception of the effective poem, as

contrast to what he considered Eliot's practice, a letter quoted by Stewart:

The art-thing sounds like the first immediate transcript of reality, but it isn't; it's a long way from the event. It isn't the raw stuff of experience. . . . There must not be a trace of the expository philosophical method, but nevertheless the substance of the philosophical conclusion must be there for the intelligent reader.

Stewart wrestles unsuccessfully with an explanation of Ransom's sudden maturing in "Necrological," (which poem is inadequately explicated by Stewart in his *John Crowe Ransom*, University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers Nov. 18, 1962) "Conrad at Twilight," and "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter," poems coming so soon after the initial fumbblings published in Ransom's first collection, *Poems about God*. But surely the key is here in Ransom's words to Tate. The poem *must seem to be* a spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling (and Ransom alludes favorably in this letter to Wordsworth's phrase "recollected in tranquility"), as exhibited in the Odes of Keats. Its form must be strict enough to prevent its being, or appearing to be, only "the raw stuff of experience," as one might consider Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." But even given strict form (which involves metrical, logical management through a strict point of view) it must not serve a predominantly expository philosophical intention, as "Sweeney among the Nightingales" may be argued to serve. Whether or not one grant Ransom that Eliot fails to find the right form, his arguments are directly helpful toward discovering what he himself is about in such a poem as "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter."

As if adapting elements of the *Poetics* of Aristotle to his practice, Ransom concerns himself with the possibilities of a dramatic lyric. The poem is to embody an action performed and not stated or narrated, by means of a restriction of form that functions as a staging of the action. Thus the poem may give its illusion of immediacy. In other words, Ransom attempts to realize in the lyric a kind of action which is on a scale different from but analagous to that action described by Aristotle as executed by Sophocles. On the one hand Ransom has reservations as to the validity of the kind of summary of character one finds in Browning's "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" or Eliot's "Portrait of a Lady." On the other hand, he eschews poetry as contemplation, such poetry as one finds in Wordsworth's "Intimations

Ode" or Eliot's later poetry. He is dissatisfied by what he calls "a mere cross-section of a brain at a given instant," and by poetry as philosophy or religion, though it should be noted that, in his statement to Tate, he requires such foundations to the poetry. Still he is equally dissatisfied by a poetry whose form itself becomes its end, one species of "pure poetry." Ransom says to Tate: "It is the formal preoccupation that destroys art, which must not appear meditated." Here, clearly, is an aesthetic concern for organic unity of the poem that is compatible to the *Poetics*, once more anticipating some of Warren's argument in "Pure and Impure Poetry." There is also a concern that "the work of art must be perfectly serious, ripe, rational, mature—full of heart, but with enough head there to govern heart." This to Tate in 1922, to which Ransom adds parenthetically that this concern "must be the trace that classical pedagogy has left on me." Classical pedagogy, both in manner and matter, would have introduced Ransom not only to the balanced mind of Aristotle but to the superlative uses of the concrete embodying the universal that one encounters repeatedly in the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. The details of Hector's farewell to his son at the gates of Troy are more relevant to "Janet Waking" than a superficial look suggests. No wonder a reader of Stewart's analysis becomes exasperated then when Stewart concludes that, since there are very few allusions to "Odysseus, Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon, Oedipus, Creon, Aeneas, or the legends of Thebes and Rome," Ransom must have "put aside the classics when writing his poetry." One might as reasonably conclude that, setting down the title *Ulysses*, Joyce put aside his knowledge of the *Odyssey*.

The inadequacy of Stewart's perception here is of a piece with that already objected to and charged to his provincialism earlier, but it requires some further pursuit so as not to seem gratuitous literary judgment on my part. When a poet has assimilated his experiences, whether as Southerner or as classical scholar, it becomes unnecessary to celebrate an awareness through the advertisements of allusion, those literary hiccups that mar the verse of many who gulp too thirstily at the Pierian springs after long wanderings in the desert. Such allusions in one's poetry—and this is the criticism Davidson directs against Eliot be it remembered in that complex poem Stewart characterizes as suitable "to the readers of Zane Grey"—may damage its authority. The general point on Stewart's failure as critic is that he does not see, either in the art or in the argument (of Davidson, Ransom, and Tate

in particular), a view of traditionalism which makes possible an action of the mind on principles in relation to the immediate event without the necessity of a preliminary dwelling upon principle. Ransom's assimilation of Aristotle and of the concept of the family common to Ithaca and Nashville affect "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter" and a dozen more of his central poems. And though Tate might disagree with the two older men on Eliot's accomplishment as poet, there is a firm agreement on principle. The "form requires the myth," Tate says in his "Horatian Epode to the Duchess of Malfi," a poem published early in the Fugitive days. It is a poem which itself might serve as an admirable commentary on what Ransom is about in his poetry, especially in regard to the inconclusive resolutions of his poems, an aspect of his poems one finds analogue to in Greek drama.) All three men feel that myth, to be effective in art, must be as intimate as breath; otherwise myth itself becomes a part of that "formal preoccupation that destroys art." As Davidson puts it in "The Thankless Muse and Her Fugitive Poets," "the images and symbols, in fact the total economy of the poem, require the support of a tradition based upon a generally diffused belief. . . . And since a tradition could not flourish without a society to support it, the natural step was to remember that after all we were Southerners and that the South still possessed at least the remnants . . . of a traditional, believing society." It is natural growth then when the most talented of the Fugitives—Ransom, Davidson, Tate, Warren—move on to Agrarianism.⁸ Instead of a pursuit to become what they are not, a pursuit accompanied by some sense of panic in that fleeing of the desert signalled by Eliot's movement East from St. Louis to London and Pound's from Idaho to Italy, there was an exploration of what they were, in Nashville, Tennessee. And what they were they found already exhibited in some of their best poetry.

What this distinction means to the mode of Ransom's poetry can be quickly seen by a contrast of "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter" to "Sweeney among the Nightingales." Eliot's adaptation of the ballad stanza allows a detached irony. The poem is static, an instrument for the weighing of failures, casting Sweeney against Agamemnon for instance. The correlatives in Eliot's poem function in the interest of philosophical conclusion, scene balanced by allusion, even as does the technique of the point of view. Eliot's concern is spiritual death, a concern which leaves more than a trace in the poem of "the expository philosophical method." Ransom's poem deals also with death, but in

the manner of the Greeks rather than of Dante: his point of interest is with the ambiguity of acceptance of the inevitable, rather than with the spiritual solution of that ambiguity. Consequently both the ballad form and the correlatives it embodies function quite differently from Eliot's. To the point also is Ransom's expressed belief that death is the most poetic of subjects, by which he means the death of a particular person (not limited to a beautiful woman as in Poe) at a particular time, not a wasting of the soul into nothingness. He says, "there is no recourse from death, except that we learn to face it, and to get on speaking terms with it, and then have the characters who leave us and bereave us pass as magnificently as possible." The comment is closely directed toward the concrete reality of death; that is, the view is a dramatic one rather than a philosophical one.

The singular thing about Ransom's "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter" is not that the reality enacted in it is that of the little girl "who might be living next door" as Stewart thinks, but the state of mind we might perceive our neighbor going through if we were attentive to his grief, given the unexpected death of his child. Thus the point of view in the poem is shifted slightly out of the parent's mind, the clue being the Browningsque title (compare "My Last Duchess"), so that the voice of the poem, the narrator's, is not literally the parent's. It is as if a close neighbor or kinsman looked over the father's shoulder. (Contrast Ransom's point of view in "Dead Boy," in which poem the words are those of an alienated kinsman, an expatriate Southerner.) The slight shift in point of view allows for a firmness of the consciousness that deals with the ironic reality of a child's death, a necessary point of control to prevent either the sentimental Charybdis which Warren notes as contrast in James Russell Lowell's "After the Burial" or the Scylla of harsh satire of the adult's vision of childhood which Stewart takes the poem to embody. The poem presents, as an action, the shock of grief attendant upon the sudden inpingement of that final disorder, death, upon the orderly consciousness of the adult. Thus the ballad stanza itself serves a different kind of ironically-presented disorder from that in Eliot's "Sweeney" poems. A reader experiences action similar to that found in a play: the disordering of the adult's mind, followed by a gradual return to painful order. Out of a state of shock, the voice of the poem moves to a dignity of grief; and the careful working of that movement, which is the poem's action, gives a dramatic unity to the poem.

To consider the poem's effect, and to some extent how Ransom's artistry brings it about: there lies behind the adult's voice a feeling of betrayal. The minor acts of violation by the child—the noises of yesterday that battered adult order, usually with little more than irritating effect on adult or goose (a nice juxtaposition of characters in the poem)—those minor acts seem suddenly more subversive, more nearly acts of conspiracy that call for something stronger than any initial "Alas!" This *brown study*, for which the child has abandoned her lesser wars, is louder in the initial instant of grief than her *bruited wars*, being as it is the final sound that time makes. But the disparity itself means guilt by association in the momentarily shocked and unbalanced mind of the narrator. It is against this shock at the depth of death that the poem happens, with the poem's voice fighting for formal control against the threat of emotional chaos. Thus the relatively strict ballad form (as opposed to the freedom of form in a poem like "Prufrock") serves the action in that it is at once appropriate to the reality of the sophisticated mind that is the narrator's and allows as well a form to the emotional action, rather than being a slice of emotional consciousness, "the raw stuff of experience." The action, that is, has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Specifically, the first stanza establishes the state of shock in the narrator's mind: the interruptions of the expected meters in lines 1 and 2 help register the shock (for the poem assumes of the reader an experience of traditional meter regularity and such sophisticated manipulations as one finds in Keats' fourth line of the stanzas of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"). The diction of the stanza is also involved in the shock. The understatement of *brown study* rings with a hollowness that allows for disappointment, irritation, puzzlement, being followed as it is by that Miltonic word of such catastrophic implication, *astonishes*. After this arresting by shock, there is a smoother recovery in the movement of the next three stanzas, toward the final resolution in the fifth stanza. Just enough anger is carried over to keep the remembrances of the child as she was when alive from becoming maudlin, in addition to which there is an elevation through disbelief. This elevation, with its tone of incredulity, attends the images and the sweep of a single sentence through the middle section toward the final stanza. It is, in that sentence, as if life itself is incredible in the presence of the hugeness of death, a nice inversion of the expected—that death is unbelievable in the presence of life, the state of mind from

which the adult is initially astonished. The reversal is psychologically appropriate to an emergence from shock. The littleness of life is exaggerated: a child's annoying geese becomes a *war*. And through this disturbed attempt to name the disparity between life and death, the poem's mind moves on to the final stanza.

In the final stanza we are reminded that whatever tragedy there is belongs to the speaker, and not to the child, by an arresting of the flow of those central stanzas and a return to the irregularity of the initial stanza. There is not, however, a duplication but a counterpointing of that first stanza, thus establishing the limits of the poem's progress and resolving its tension. The speaker rises out of shocked confusion to acceptance. Such hesitation, appropriate to initial shock, as is carried in the first stanza by the meter of *little body* and *football* now finds an aesthetically pleasing resolution in the finality of *sternly stopped* and *primly propped* of the last stanza. Even the repetition of *brown study* in the end-stopped line of the last stanza has a different emotional value from its first use in the run-on line of stanza one. What such use of words and music do of course is produce as a reality a state of mind. But the poem is neither the raw stuff of experience nor a history of grief, as in the narrative moment of "Prufrock" or philosophical moment of "Sweeney among the Nightingales." It is a moment of awareness expanded to accommodate a dramatic beginning, middle, and end. Ransom's use of awareness is too close to what Aristotle means by *action* to dismiss the Greek influence out of hand. And his concern for death as a cause for a poem is one akin to that of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, rather than to Plato's *Phaedo* or Poe's "Philosophy of Composition." It is hardly suitable then to consider that Ransom, as he was assuming the position of influence among the Fugitives which they unanimously ascribe to him, "had no firm base of ideas from which to venture forth," as Stewart says of him.

Indeed returning to the basic faults of *The Burden of Time* expressed initially, through which I presented John Stewart as typical of the New Provincialism, I can but conclude that it is Stewart who has no firm base of ideas from which to venture upon such a study as he has undertaken. Where a Ransom can play—upon such a basic cultural heritage as that from the Greek dramatists and Homer and upon such accepted form as the ballad stanza—a unique music, Stewart, swept by the popular current of the day, can do little more than echo the cries of

the moment and deal hardly at all, though at great length, with idea or art.

NOTES

¹On Stewart's abuse of historians, as well as of history: he says of Frank Lawrence Owsley, "The Agrarians may have admired Owsley's version of the wicked North, but professional historians looked upon it with laughter and scorn." Stewart offers no substantiation of the charge, either by concrete reference to historian or historical work. It is a procedure most suspect since Francis B. Simpkins, a professional historian (as was Owsley) whom Stewart twice appeals to as reputable is sympathetic to Owsley's views and cites Owsley as authority in his *The South Old and New* (page 497). For further substantiation, see Simpkins' *The Everlasting South*, particularly the chapter "Tolerating the South's Past."

²Stewart is particularly negligent in his treatment of Tate's prose. He asserts that one of the failures "characteristic of all agrarian speculation on the relation of the writer to the times" is that it gives no "explanation of the alienation of the artist" since it takes "no account of forces having only indirectly or even no connection with the decline of tradition—mass production publication requiring huge sales, the development of a semi-literate market through public education, and the lingering Puritan mistrust of arts." One need only read Tate's "Profession of Letters in the South," the first few paragraphs of which deal with these forces Stewart names. And one might note as well that Davidson's contribution to *I'll Take My Stand*, "A Mirror for Artists," is replete with awareness of these forces, as indeed are the writings in general of the Fugitive-Agrarians, a natural consequence of their struggles in publishing the *Fugitive* magazine.

³Henry Grady's account of the burial of a man in Pickens County, Georgia, delivered to a Northern audience, electrified the nation and led to journalistic gushings not yet spared us. If one looks closely at the speech, it shows clearly enough that Grady is championing raw materialism; there is no hint of a concern with whether the dead man had mind or soul. There is only a concern that the South make money by providing the materials for future burials. The passage serves beautifully as a specimen carrying that odor of death that hangs upon the lips of the New South spirit. After cataloguing the foreign materials used, the South having provided only the corpse, Grady continues: "We have got [since that burial] the biggest marble-cutting establishment on earth within a hundred yards of the grave [for future tombstones]. We have got a dozen woolen mills right around it [to provide burial clothes], and iron mines, and iron factories [to provide nails for the coffins]. We are coming to meet you [the North]. We are going to make a noble revenge . . . by invading every inch of your territory with iron." This is the spirit championed since by such latter-day Grady's as Ralph McGill, who as of this writing has still seen no connection between Grady's philosophy and the Birmingham Bombings and Los Angeles Riots.

⁴Davidson's concern for delving into the modern situation by looking closely at history and prevailing philosophy is one aspect of his kinship to Ezra Pound, who just after World War I began such probings in earnest. Though their solutions to the modern world's problems aren't the same (Pound tending toward a reformed centralized power that Davidson rejects) they are actively committed to castigation of a civilization Pound described in 1920 as an "old bitch gone in the teeth." Both committed themselves early on fundamental issues in an engagement larger than literary, in consequence of which both are critical of Eliot. Davidson's arguments against historical determinism and against the Eastern financial establishment, in his *Attack on Leviathan* notably, find complements in Pound's essays of the 1920's and 1930's collected in *Impact: Essays on Ignorance and the Decline of American Civilization*. Both have been influential teachers, as the many public acknowledgments indicate. On their concern for the public's relation to art, compare Pound's "Possibilities of Civilization: What the Small Town Can Do" (1936) to Davidson's "Mirror for Artists" (1930). Pound cites Cesena, Italy, as example of what a few spirits can do toward establishing and

preserving a cultural heritage. He would have found John Donald Wade attempting at Marshallville, Georgia, what he prescribes: "figure out what you can do with the local plant . . . Find out something not being done in New York or London." And one recalls the cultural revival of Nashville in the 1920's, but particularly a failure to ignore New York, which failure Davidson castigates in various poems and essays. One significant distinction between Davidson and Pound lies in Davidson's awareness of a heritage in the South that Pound denies; speaking of America Pound says, "We . . . have no families who have lived father to son in the same house for 2000 (two thousand) years," as if his journey into Italy would answer the absence. Davidson decided early the truth of the epigram Pound quotes for our guidance: "intelligence is international, stupidity is national, art is local."

⁵Predictably, because of the political explosiveness of the evidence in the Moynihan Report, it was initially suppressed by Secretary of Labor Wirtz, but has since been used by a variety of public educators from Theodore White to the President of the United States. What Moynihan discovered is what Lytle and Davidson pointed out thirty years ago, though they were not so intent on general dissolution as to suggest preferential treatment. In another thirty years perhaps it will be possible to study Hitler's "solution" to the Jewish problem and the militant liberal's solution to the Negro problem objectively enough to see that both destroy the individual, white or black or Jew, though the one died more immediately and spectacularly than the others. I expect as inevitable a shock to many readers from my yoking of the two "solutions," given a society that is materialistic and secular. But the truth seems evident that the social revolt of the 1960's is in the interest of things, though much talk is made of freedom, human rights, and so on. The real desire is toward color television and a second car, via civil service sinecure.

⁶Dr. James McConnell of the University of Michigan Center for Research of Mental Health, in reporting on experiments with RNA acid used with flatworms and rodents, made the suggestion presumably in jest. But the enthusiasm with which a reporter present seized the jest as his serious lead, to which his paper prefaced a catching headline ("Scientist Says Injections Might Replace Lecture," Athens *Banner-Herald*, March 6, 1966) serves to indicate what demand may be made of RNA by the "popular will," particularly in an election year.

⁷Again, it is evidence of the failure of Stewart's study that Virgil, Horace, and Latin poetry in general are ignored, though no full treatment of Davidson is acceptable that doesn't deal with this influence as it affects both his poetry and ideology. See John Crowe Ransom's review of Davidson's *Long Street*: "The Most Southern Poet," *Sewanee Review*, Spring 1962.

⁸It is interesting to observe a continuing community of minds among Ransom, Davidson, Tate, and Warren, as separate from the other Fugitives gathered at Vanderbilt for the 1956 reunion. More is involved than simply deference to their superior talents and accomplishments as the four come to occupy the center of the stage to answer questions posed by some of the others present or debate a question concerning Fugitive accomplishment or Agrarian argument. Warren's participation bears looking into, he being the one of the four who seems most estranged. Davidson remained at Vanderbilt, teaching and writing; Ransom at Gambier had the *Kenyon Review* and his garden; Tate, though mobile, had the Church and Dante to steady him. Warren, the most restless of the group, had no such anchors, as the quality of his fiction since World War II seems to me to reflect. But it is Warren, in the final symposium of *Fugitives' Reunion*, who seizes finally upon the rambling attempt to establish what the Agrarians were about and talks with somewhat angry fervor about that spirit that moved them in the late 20's, with Ransom, Davidson, Tate approving his statement. The extent of Warren's disaffection with his old position is not clear, though on the "Today Show" (May 17, 1965), in connection with the release of his *Who Speaks for the Negro*, he repudiated his essay in *I'll Take My Stand* as being written while he was going to school in the South shortly before he saw the error of his ways. Still, the manner and the matter of his recent collections of poems, *You Emperor and Others* and *Promises*, indicates that the repudiation was not so thorough as his television statement would have it.